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Re: In Opposition to HBO6633: A Needs Assessment and Fair Share Plans

Ladies and Gentlemen:

This building is really one of the most poorly conceived I have seen. It is truly outrageous on several grounds:

1. Who is establishing the benchmarks for "fair?"
 - a. A small group of non-elected parties in conversations with other non-elected parties will make that determination for each and every town. The Secretary of the Office of Policy and Management in consultation with Commissioners of Housing and Economic and Community Development and others "as may be determined by the secretary..."
 - b. This is not trackable. It is a closed loop, a behind the scenes deal making process not including our towns or citizens. It is not open to public vote or scrutiny. It is a disheartening and frankly appalling process.
2. What happened to the many towns who spent thoughtful time and resources with input from all levels who have recently prepared and submitted their own plans for affordable housing?
 - a. These are set asides/formulae to follow instead. The target is towns who generate the most revenue period regardless of the town's own analysis. Why is Hartford intent on penalizing growth and success?
3. Now, the bill says let's set up three levels of affordable housing. Let us make it even more complex. Let's make these initiatives have more burden of bureaucracy and "proof."
4. If that complexity is not enough, let's make a point system. As someone said, this is not carrot and stick. It is more sticks and more sticks.
5. The bill says let us tie in the certificate of occupancy issuance to the "fair share" goals. C of O's are already tricky. The process is often protracted by its own weight of paperwork. So now, this will further delay occupancy and put another financial burden on the team trying to sponsor and develop.
6. Finally, the bill sets up an avenue for litigation if a town or village or city is "viewed" as not going fast enough.

This bill will give revenue to lawyers and to civil servants and do nothing to enhance our housing. It will inevitably slow down or fully prevent reasonable initiatives. It is giving lots of paperwork jobs, not places to live. Our state has so many pressures weighing it down already as a sustainable place to live, to work, and to raise families. Why are you administering yet another body blow to our citizens?

Respectfully Submitted.

Barbara L. Geddis, FAIA